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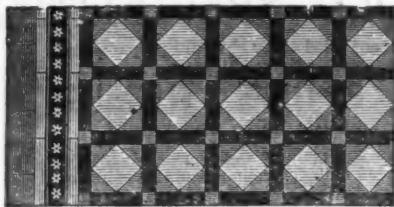
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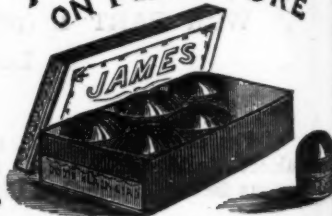
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"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 562. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1879.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## SEBASTIAN STROME.

BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

### CHAPTER XIX. NEW QUARTERS.

WHAT, then, was the cause of Sebastian's failure to appear, as he had promised to do, at the wedding, and denounce the bridegroom before the assembly?

Before approaching that question, we shall have lightly to trace his history from his father's funeral. It will be remembered that on coming to Cedarhurst the night of his father's death, he left Smillet in charge of his furniture and belongings, with instructions to hold an auction at the earliest day possible, and reduce them to cash. Now, if he had gone over the whole list of his friends and acquaintances, with a view to selecting the one best fitted to carry out precisely this undertaking, he could not have hit upon another man in every respect so suitable as Smillet. Smillet entered upon the work with zeal, energy, and circumspection. At the outset he resolved upon two things: first, that the sale should be a success, and secondly, that he would not buy so much as a single "lot" himself. This latter resolution is worth noting, as exhibiting a most commendable and indeed heroic self-denial on Smillet's part. For nothing would have pleased him so much as to buy in the entire contents of the rooms at three times their actual value, and to present the proceeds to Strome as a slight testimonial of his esteem. But knowing as he did that such a course would be galling to Strome's theory of independence, and being unwilling to back up his action by telling lies about it, he made up his mind that the transaction should be so fair and square that, though

his friend were ten times as sensitive as he was, it should be impossible for him to take exception at it.

He began by taking out an auctioneer's licence. Having thus qualified himself for action, he engaged the services of an enlightened and humane appraiser, and shut himself up with him in Strome's rooms, together with a couple of blank books and a capital luncheon in a covered basket. They went over every article in the rooms, pasted labels on them, and entered them in catalogue; and Smillet furthermore appended to each lot, in his private notebook, the highest money values which the appraiser's conscience would permit him to assign them. The work lasted, with reasonable intermissions for refreshment, from ten in the morning until seven at night, when Smillet paid the appraiser, dismissed him, and conscientiously put the amount paid on the debit side of Strome's account. On casting up the total of the sums for which the things had been appraised, he was gratified to find that it already showed somewhat larger than he had ventured to expect.

He now took his catalogue to the printer's, and by noon of the next day he had six hundred copies struck off. A circular was also printed, containing an original and highly stimulating address, in which the attractions of the sale were set forth in glowing language, and it was ingenuously stated that Mr. Smillet himself, whose social popularity was too widespread and well-founded to require mention, would himself officiate at the auctioneer's desk. These catalogues and circulars were despatched through the post to their various addresses; and it is not too much to say that they created a positive sensation.



It was the Christmas holidays, everybody was in town, and in need of a sensation: what could be more novel and piquant than this? Moreover, Smillet's personal acquaintance in the London fashionable world was exceptionally extensive; and during the interval which had to elapse between the dissemination of the circulars and the sale, he made it his business to call upon every soul he knew, to drag in the topic of the said auction by the head and ears, and not to relinquish it until he had extorted a solemn promise on the interlocutor's part to be present at it with money in his pocket. Throughout, he made a great mystery of the name of the gentleman on whose behalf the sale was held; and this mystery, while it enhanced the general curiosity and excitement, had the additional advantage of sparing Strome a rather ungainly sort of publicity; for very few people had known where Strome lived, and they were not among the number who were likely to attend the sale.

When the day came, the sun, as if to show his approval of the proceedings, made a great effort, and precisely at twelve o'clock poked his kind countenance through the mephitic London vapours, and kept it in sight for two mortal hours. This gallant deed did not pass unrecognised: convinced that so singular a meteorological phenomenon must forbode a memorable sale, the invited guests presented themselves at Mrs. Blister's unassuming doorway in such numbers, and with such splendour of holiday attire, and rumbling of fashionable carriage-wheels, that the good woman fell into a kind of sibilant ecstasy; and finally retired to Mrs. Bartlet's, and there held forth concerning the beau monde, the uncertainty of human life, and the comparative merits of gin sweet and unsweetened gin, until the shadows of night had fallen, and the famous sale had been for many hours a thing of the past.

It was a triumphant success in every way. Smillet's appearance and performance as auctioneer were so enormously diverting—and at the same time his acuteness and self-possession were so far beyond what anybody was prepared for—that the contention seemed to be who should bid and overbid the highest for things, the chief merit of which, after all allowances had been made, lay in the absurd eloquence with which Smillet recommended them. The lots were all sold out in less than a couple of hours; and the auctioneer found himself in possession of a sum of money

which, after all the expenses incident to the enterprise had been met, all tradesmen's claims against Strome settled, and Smillet's own advance to the latter of fifty pounds repaid, left money enough to buy back the entire property at the price which Strome had originally given for it.

As for that fifty-pound loan, Smillet was in hopes that his friend would have forgotten all about it. It had been proffered and accepted at a moment when Strome, half delirious with excitement, long fasting, and the shock of the news about Fanny Jackson and his father, had scarcely known what he was doing; and Smillet, in taking advantage of his unusual docility to foist the money upon him, had hoped that the whole transaction might have escaped his memory. But in this hope he was disappointed; Strome remembered very well; and when he came up to London, a few days after the sale was over, and stopped over-night at Smillet's rooms, he discharged the debt, with an expression of gratitude so emphatic as to cause his benefactor to reddened uncomfortably, and to take himself to task for not having managed matters better. The idea that so great a man as Strome should imagine that so insignificant a man as Smillet could really do anything deserving of his gratitude, made Smillet feel like a sort of impostor. The utmost that he could do must, in the nature of things, fall short of what ought to be done. Smillet was by no means lacking in self-conceit of a certain sort; but it never took the form of claiming merit for deeds which he considered incumbent upon him from the social, and especially from the friendly stand-point. In the latter case, though he should strain every nerve, yet being Smillet, he must necessarily fail of fully accomplishing his aim. Men of Smillet's stamp are useful to fill the gap left by those superior spirits who consider it sufficient to have an aim, but supererogatory to realize it.

"And what are you going to do now?" Smillet had enquired, after business matters had been disposed of. "Shall you marry before entering the Church?" For he knew nothing of his friend's hidden history.

"I'm not going to marry at all," Strome replied; and then, in answer to his hearer's exclamations, he told him the whole shameful story.

As Smillet listened, he reddened like a schoolboy; his eyes sought the floor; once in a while he glanced up at the



speaker with an appalled, deprecatory look. When Strome had concluded, which he did with a feeling of dull forlornness, not finding himself so stoical as to be indifferent to the loss even of Smillet's respect—the latter began to wink and to gulp, and finally laid his face down upon his arms on the table, and for some time gave out no articulate utterance. Strome, thinking that he might as well take his departure, was getting up from his chair with that purpose in view; but Smillet thereupon raised his head, and blurted out: "Don't go!" Then he rubbed his eye-glass diligently on the skirt of his coat, stuck it in his eye, and said:

"Oh, Strome; I'd rather have done it myself!"

"Good heavens!" Strome murmured.

Even if the affair had been none of his, he could not have smiled at the uncouth, naïve self-abnegation of that saying. It was spoken from a higher level than he had ever reached. In fact, it so vividly revealed to him his inferiority that he was afraid to make any remark about it, lest he should shock Smillet by some involuntary coarseness. Really, he was hardly fit to sit and talk familiarly with a man who could utter such a thing as that, and be unconscious of having said anything remarkable!

"But what shall you do?" Smillet finally enquired.

"Well, I'll tell you. I am going among my like. I'm not at home here. There are people in London who will suit me better. I don't mean to say that they would not have made better use than I've done of the opportunities I have had; but their atmosphere will be easier to breathe. I shall live where Fanny would have lived, if she had gone on the road on which I started her. She was more my wife than any other woman will ever be, and I shall take my cue from that. From henceforth I have no business west of Aldgate."

"Do you mean to say," cried Smillet in tones creaking with dismay, "that you are going to give it up? You don't mean you are going to the—to—"

"To the devil?" supplied Strome, smiling a little, and glad to smile; "well, not exactly—at least in the ordinary sense of the phrase. I am going to the devil, inasmuch as I suppose his satanic majesty lives in Whitechapel as much as in other places; but not with the intention of putting my services at his disposal. I'm going there because it may be considered

as at the bottom of things, or pretty near it; and it's at the bottom that I wish to begin, but I mean to do the best I can there; that is, I mean neither to steal, nor to murder; but to work for my living, and to take care of my baby."

"But what can you—are you going to preach to them?"

"No; not even on the text of myself."

"Of all men in the world, you are the last one I should think could stand that sort of thing," Smillet said after a pause. "You are the most fastidious fellow I know. How are you going to put up with dirt and bad smells, and drunken neighbours and rows? Oh, I say, Strome, it won't do! And with a baby, too!"

"You must understand that I am no apostle going to redeem the heathen; but one of the heathen themselves—only, one who is convinced of the practical expediency of decent and law-abiding conduct. It is very possible that I may come to lose that conviction; if so, all I have to say is, I shall be in a truer position than I'm in now—I shall know how much of me is genuine, and how much is humbug. And the utmost I expect is, that what there is genuine in me will speak for itself, and attract its like. Meantime, I shan't put on any airs."

"How long are you going to keep this up?"

"As long as I see anything in the people I am with that reminds me of anything I have seen in myself. And if I ever come out, it will only be when I can bring along with me some man who has deserved rescue less than I have, and who nevertheless wishes it more. That will not be for some time, Smillet."

"But look here, Strome, if you are really going in for this sort of thing, why not get ordained first? You would have ever so much more influence over the people."

"In the first place, why should I have any influence? What business have I to suppose that any influence I could exercise would be wholesome? But that isn't all; I don't care to discuss the subject; but the fact is I have no belief that would authorise me to get ordained, even assuming that any bishop would consent to ordain me. It seems to me that men are put into the world and then left to do the best they can for themselves—without any heavenly assistance. If any of my heathen friends were to come to me for religious consolation, that is all I should be able to

tell them—and that would not consort very well with a cassock and a white choker. So I shall be better as I am."

"You will live in respectable lodgings, anyway," Smillet said, brightening up a little after a period of sombre meditation. "You can live like a prince, in that region, on the interest of five hundred pounds. And I shall be able to drop in to see you every few days——"

"No, you wont!" interposed the other, bringing his hands down slowly on the arms of his chair, and grasping them firmly. "No one I have ever known will know where to find me, and if they did, they would not find me companionable. I have promised to write regularly to my mother, but she will not know where the letters are written, and I shall get no answers to them. As for the five hundred pounds, I shan't touch it. I am going to support myself, or have no support. In the latter case, the money will be for the baby, after I am out of the way. No, I'm going to play fair, and take my chances with the rest. To be sure, I shall have the advantage of a liberal education—and I shall be curious to see how much that will be worth! Now, Smillet old fellow, I have told you more than I have told any one else. There are some things about you which make me think more highly of you than of any other man I know who is living now—a fact which you will never be able to comprehend as long as you live. But what I have told you is in confidence, and I wish you to say nothing about it. I am going to be buried, and I wish the funeral to be strictly private, and the grave unmolested. Well, I must be off. Good night, Smillet!"

Smillet did not ask his friend to stop a little longer: both of them being Englishmen, they tacitly understood that the conversation had got to a point beyond which it ought not to go. Smillet, indeed, had already manifested more emotion than strict good form allowed. When Strome arose, therefore, he also got to his feet, and followed him in silence to the door, where they faced one another for the last time, and each squeezed the other's hand very hard. Smillet wished to say a parting word, but he thought he should not be able to manage more than a simple "Good-bye." However, when he had got this out, in rather an uncertain squeak, he managed to add the following: "And I can tell you, Strome, this will make a big difference to me!" But to any elucidation of this arcanum he was unequal.

Strome walked down the street with a heavy step, feeling that he had separated himself finally from his half of the world, and that henceforth he was to enjoy whatever satisfaction there might be in never pretending to be any better than he really was. And yet he had hardly turned the corner into Piccadilly when he met a handsome young fellow, exquisitely dressed, whom he had known in Berlin as an attaché of the embassy there; and this budding diplomatist, who had arrived only the day before from the continent, greeted Strome with most elegant cordiality, asked after his health and prosperity in cheerfullest accents, and entreated him to come down to Greenwich and dine with him and a nice set of fellows at the Trafalgar. Strome was half tempted to fall in with the grim humour of this idea; besides, it was singularly pleasant to be treated so much above his deserts. For a moment he thought, "Why not take everything that has happened as a dream, which in a certain sense it is, and live on the fat of the land for eight hours more!" He declined the invitation, however, told a dozen white lies with all his customary grace, held his cordial acquaintance's kid-gloved hand in his own for an instant, and then they parted with smiles. Strome walked on, without further adventures, and was soon beyond the farthest limits of the fashionable world, wherein for some years he had cut no inconsiderable figure. It remained to be seen what sort of a figure he would cut east of Aldgate.

What he had said to Smillet was no more than the truth—that to no one else had he confided so much of his intentions. But it may fairly be doubted whether he could have cut himself adrift with that confidence unmade. Men are curiously dependent upon each other, even when they most fancy the opposite; not least is it so with men like Strome, who inevitably occupy a large place in their own regard: not necessarily a favourable place, but still a large one. Strome was very independent, in the ordinary sense of the word: but he was too self-conscious, too affected, too much in the habit of thinking about his appearance in other people's eyes, to have been capable of taking this plunge without posing for a moment before somebody. Who that somebody was would make little difference, provided only he were a part of the life that was left behind. This weakness can hardly be deemed discreditable—it is too pathetic for that; and so common to human nature, that probably no human

being would commit suicide in the face of an absolute certainty that no other human being would ever know the deed had been done.

Be this as it may, Strome was now fairly at grips with his new existence. He must have known that the step he had taken was a desperate one, something more than audacious; and he may have allowed this perception to flatter his self-esteem. He could imagine people saying, "Who but Strome would ever have dreamed of doing such a thing!" A cat has nine lives, but self-esteem is livelier than a hydra. At the same time, it is impossible that he should have fully realised, stretch his imagination how he might, what the actual conditions and sensations of a Whitechapel life would be. Who can realise all the loathsome, stifling, insane, stupid hideousness of life in a London slum? Not, certainly, those whom curiosity urges to pass through Houndsditch or Flower-and-Dean Street in company with a policeman. Not, certainly, those benevolent and most praiseworthy men and women who visit the slums for charitable purposes, who institute schools or refuges in their midst, and who, perhaps, spend most of their time in conducting or superintending the latter. Not even those enterprising spirits who actually take up their lodging in the slum itself—eat there, and sleep there, and derive their wardrobe from a seventh-hand slop-shop, and so remain for weeks together, or it may be for months, or perhaps for a year; and, when they come out, write a thrilling book about their experiences—not even these persons have any notion of what life is in a London slum. There is only one way to find out what that is; you must go there, not out of curiosity, nor for charity's sake, nor in order to write a book; but because the slum is your home. And having made it your home, you must also feel that it will always remain your home; in short, that you could not get out again, no matter how much you might desire to do so; but that as you have lived there, so you will die there, and nobody be the wiser or the sorrier, though perhaps some few might be the happier, and take occasion to remark that it would have been a saving of trouble if you had died before, and that as for your corpse, it is a nuisance. When you have done this, then you will have a fair notion of what life is like in a London slum; but even then you must hide your diminished head before your neighbour who was born as

well as lived and died there. He and he only is in complete possession of the facts; but he will never communicate them to anyone else, for they are incommunicable, and it is a very good thing that they are so.

Such being the present writer's view of this matter, the reader will understand that no harrowing descriptions of life in a London slum are to be looked for in this book. It is to be observed, moreover, that Strome, in spite of what he had said about his resolution to "play fair," could not in the nature of things, and with the best will in the world, fully act up to his assertion. Not only was he unable to be born in Spitalfields, but he could not live there without the consciousness that he might stop living there whenever he pleased. It is all very well to make vows—nay, to keep them when made; but it is quite another thing to be in a position where vows do not signify either one way or the other. There is an ancient story of an old man, an inhabitant of Milan, who for sixty years had never happened to go outside the city walls. The duke, being informed of this, thereupon decreed that what he had refrained from doing so long of his own free will, he should thenceforth be restrained from doing whether he willed it or not. "Whereat," saith the chronicler, "he, though never before having wished to go forth, soon died of grief at being denied his liberty." And thus Strome, in taking up his residence in a villanous quarter of the world's capital, was in great measure moved so to do by the very fact that the deed was a voluntary one. Whatever pain he might suffer, whatever degradation he might undergo, he would always be able to say—he never could help saying: "This need not have been had I willed otherwise." And although this was no fault of his, and although the life he had chosen was unlovely enough on the best of terms, he must still retain herein an indefinite advantage over his fellows who could not help themselves. On the other hand, it is to be remembered that, deprived of this advantage, he would also have missed the moral discipline to obtain which seems to have been the immediate cause of his action. Had his position been involuntary, all his energies would have been directed to escaping from it, or raging against it, instead of turning it to the profit of his moral man.

We are not then, to return to the point, required to contemplate a life-like picture of



Spitalfields and such like places, but at most to bear in mind that they formed Strome's environment at this epoch: that he was subjected to their influences; that filth, disease, theft, and murder were his neighbours; that he was beset by all ugly sights, sounds, and deeds; that nearly everything that makes outward existence pleasant was away from him. When it is considered that he was a young man of particularly refined taste in most matters, very fond of æsthetic delights, and alive to delicate sensuous impressions; predisposed, moreover, to the higher intellectual pursuits, to witty and pregnant conversation, to the contact of cultivated minds: in short, when we reflect how grotesque and monstrous was the abhorrence of the life he was now about to lead from that he had led hitherto, we shall perhaps see how it was that he imagined himself to be doing a rather extraordinary thing, if not a thing involving a certain amount of saturnine grandeur and heroism. Yes; for though Sebastian Strome had passed beyond Aldgate, and pitched his tent in an inferior sort of pandemonium, and left behind him most of what had constituted his former life, there was one thing which still stuck to him as closely as ever; and that was a marked interest in the thoughts and acts of Sebastian Strome, and a species of admiration for them.

What was his object in going to pandemonium? Is the explanation of his motives, as given by him to Smillet, to be taken as true, and the whole truth? He talked well on that occasion, and made out a tolerably good case, almost a suspiciously good one. But do people, as a matter of fact, ever proceed upon such sternly unhopeful and self-mortifying principles as he then professed? Did he really look upon himself as the moral inferior of the worst of the criminal classes? Did he honestly believe that God, having snared mankind in the net of the flesh, leaves them to wriggle there without further concern for them? And if so, did not that belief invalidate the logic of his argument? Had he, in truth, no aspiration to do good, but at most some purpose not to do evil? Was his sense of eternal justice satisfied by simply uniting himself with the rank of life into which he had sinned? That may be dignified, impressive, Byronic—but is it genuine? Had Strome no sneaking expectation of becoming a sort of apostle after all? He had read and heard, doubtless, that amongst the vices of the

poor and criminal classes, veins of strange virtue are sometimes found and brought to light. Did he not look forward to cultivating these virtuous veins of theirs, and constituting himself a sort of centre of illumination in their midst? In brief, was he not making a solemn fool of himself? It seems necessary to make these painful enquiries because, although Strome has hitherto been allowed in great measure to tell his own story, and draw his own likeness, it has now become desirable to look at him from an independent point of view. It is time to consider whether he retained, in the privacy of his secret meditations, that proud and severe demeanour which he presented to his friends; whether his stoical composure in doing unprecedented things were anything more than histrionic eccentricity; whether, in fine, a truly sincere man would not have hit upon some less strained and conspicuous method of making atonement. For atonement was no doubt Strome's object—that, and the desire to render himself less unworthy to be named as his father's son. But to invite disagreeable or intolerable circumstances is not necessarily atonement; a man need not be repentant though he lash himself with a cat-o'-nine-tails; and Sebastian could not rise to his father's level by any such rough-and-ready expedient as that of living amongst people who could have no intellectual sympathy with him. But might not he and they sympathise with one another on other than intellectual grounds—on the broad ground of their human kinship? It cannot be denied that such a sympathy may exist, but not for one who is a sceptic. Such a sympathy, if it be genuine and not factitious, postulates the recognition of the essential brotherhood of man; and the essential brotherhood of man postulates the Divine Humanity. Now Sebastian professed not to believe in the Divine Humanity.

Well, at all events, here was Sebastian in pandemonium, and, being there, there was a fair probability that there he would stay; not so much from the principle of inertia, as because the pride of human consistency—the most irrational and illusory of all forms of pride—would tend to keep him there long after his heart and mind were sick of it. And as against this pride of human consistency, which has sometimes led men to commit murder lest they should endanger their chances of going to heaven by breaking the oath they had sworn to commit it—as against this,

what was there? Well, not much of anything, unless it were accident—and the baby!

To do him justice, Sebastian was not quite consistent enough to choose his lodgings in the very most loathsome part of pandemonium; on the contrary, they cost him no less than five shillings and sixpence a week, and consisted of a second-floor room sixteen feet by twelve, opening into a smaller room twelve feet by six. Each of these rooms had a window which looked out, not upon an enclosed court, but upon the street itself. The neighbourhood was unquestionably a very low neighbourhood; but these apartments of Strome's were among the best and airiest that the neighbourhood afforded; on certain days in summer, in favourable years, the sunshine was said sometimes to touch the summit of one of the tumble-down chimneys on the roof overhead. Why did Strome occupy these aristocratic quarters instead of living in the cellar below—as he could legally have done in the year 1855—where he might have breathed the aroma of a cesspool all the day round, shovelled out the dead rats and other vermin every Sunday, or whenever an exceptional rage for cleanliness possessed him; and every evening have studied the phenomena of male and female bodies rendered insensible by drunkenness or violence, and falling through the oblong hole in the pavement of the court which served him as a doorway? Why not take advantage of the superior opportunities of atonement offered by the cellar? Surely this was not consistency; neither, on the other hand, was it accident; we are, therefore, driven to the conclusion that it must have been the baby. The baby, then, was already beginning to make its voice heard in the conduct of the new life. Would its influence be deleterious or otherwise?

Strome deposited his fashionable wardrobe at the nearest pawnbroker's, retaining only one very threadbare suit, which he proposed to wear when business should call him away from his immediate neighbourhood. For the rest he attired himself in the cast-off garments of a defunct sailor, which he purchased at the slop-shop for two shillings and sixpence. His furniture consisted of a table and chair and a straw mattress, and for the baby a crib, which was placed in the little side room. He had a pot for boiling meat and potatoes, and a skillet to heat milk for the baby. Altogether an economical and practical

outfit which, moreover, cost comparatively little; but it should be mentioned that Strome, when putting the five hundred pounds into the bank for the benefit of the baby, had reserved a matter of ten pounds for himself. This sum he resolved should be the only money not earned by his own labour that should stand between him and starvation. If that went before more could be made to put in its place then the baby should be put forthwith into the enjoyment of its modest fortune; but as for Sebastian, he would simply go back to his second-floor front apartments and there remain until it should be necessary for the landlord to have his body removed. Sebastian was determined to be independent, and possibly heroic likewise.

But what profession did he propose to follow, and by dint thereof to keep his ten pounds from melting into nothing? Was it the profession of propagandist of the Church of Rome—a profession which is popularly supposed to be adequately paid, and for the exercise of which there was, it is easy to believe, an ample field in the neighbourhood which he had chosen for his habitation? We have heard Sebastian express a liking for the Roman system, and assert some disposition to avail himself of its advantages. No; he had no present intention of becoming a propagandist of the Church of Rome. It could not be because he had no faith in the religion; he had never professed to have any faith in it in the ordinary sense of the word, nor, for that matter, to have faith in any religion whatever. He had intended to take it up merely as an agreeable method of killing time, and of gratifying a cynical personal ambition. Well, at what period of his life could he expect to have more need of killing time agreeably than at the present? Could it be that he had ceased to think that a cynical personal ambition was worth gratifying? Or could it be that he found propagandism incompatible with the claims of the baby? At all events, he does not seem to have entertained any idea of treating the Roman Catholic Church to any portion either of his five hundred pounds or of his time; and men must be judged by their acts when there is nothing better to judge them by. The profession that Sebastian chose to follow might perhaps be more accurately termed a trade—the trade of carving in wood.

The following of this trade would not necessitate his leaving his room, except



occasionally to carry his work to the firm that employed him; therefore he would be able to keep an eye on the baby. He had reserved his tools from the sale of his property; they took up very little room, and he worked at his table in the window. Before hiring his lodgings east of Aldgate he had presented himself at a certain shop in the city with a specimen of his work, and had arranged with the master of the shop for a supply of the like articles, at a moderate rate of remuneration, it is true, but still sufficient to maintain a family of two whose rent was but five shillings and sixpence a week, and whose chief expense beyond this was for a daily supply of fresh milk for the baby. So Sebastian sat at his table day after day, and on Sundays the same as other days, and carved boxes, and candlesticks, and card-racks, and brackets, and bookstands, out of wood; and sold them for enough to pay the rent and the milkman's bill and one or two other things, and kept an eye upon the baby, who, strange to tell, thrived very well in this unfashionable quarter of the town. Matters went on in this prosperous manner for three or four months, and no adventures worth recording took place, although things happened every day and night which might have been looked upon as adventures in a less unfashionable quarter of the town; and on April Fool's Day a gentleman who sold matches was murdered in the doorway of the house adjoining Strome's, and the noise, which unfortunately is usually inseparable from such transactions, woke up Strome's baby and made it cry. Nevertheless the baby thrived, and conducted itself with the despotic dependence normal to persons of its age in all ranks of life. Strome did not thrive quite so well, but he did not get murdered, nor even become involved in any serious quarrel with anybody. Nobody took much notice of him; and, in fact, he was not quite so noticeable a man, with his beard grown, and clad in the defunct sailor's garments, as he had been at the time of our first acquaintance with him. He worked much, and perhaps thought much, though of that we have no certain knowledge, for he spoke little to anyone except the baby. At length a day arrived when he knew that Selim Fawley was going to marry Mary Dene.

Sebastian entrusted the baby to the care of a woman who lived on the same floor, and whose character need not be too closely inquired into; but she had long

been fond of the baby. He put on his best clothes and called on Fawley, with what result we have heard. What had been done to the baby while he was away will never be known; but that night it was taken ill, and it remained ill for many days. At the hour when Mary Dene was being made the wife of Selim Fawley, Sebastian was sitting with the baby in his arms and much misery in his heart. He could not leave it, even to save Mary. No; he could not leave it. But oh, the rage and misery in his heart!

### THE LASH IN THE ARMY.

MORE than fourteen years ago, there appeared in this periodical three articles upon the difficulties we then experienced in recruiting for the army;\* all of which papers were much canvassed at the time, and often quoted in the military journals of the day, as well as by officers in the service. Great and numerous as were the evils then depicted, and many as were the difficulties and obstacles shown, as having to be overcome in trying to keep our regiments up to their proper strength, there can be no doubt that these difficulties have increased immensely since the days I speak of. In the year 1865 our army had many defects and shortcomings; but in 1879 it seems that we have hardly what can be called an army at all. It is true that changes have been made, and that reforms have been inaugurated in the service; but these movements have not been made in the right direction. We have copied from other countries—notably from Germany—alterations in our organization, which, however much they may be suited to the lands in which they were instituted, are by no means adapted to our peculiar wants or to the military emergencies in which from time to time we find ourselves. During the last session, debates—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say discussions—in both Houses of Parliament succeeded in establishing two most important facts regarding the present condition of the service. In the first place it is, to use the mildest possible term, most defective as to the quality of the men we have in the ranks. In the second place, as to quantity, it leaves a very great deal to be desired.

\* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, First Series, Vol. 13, page 172, "How to Recruit the English Army;" Vol. 14, page 276, "Military Punishment;" Vol. 14, page 464, "Why We Can't Get Recruits."

According to the returns presented to the House of Commons in May last\* five infantry regiments were despatched to South Africa when the disastrous news from Zululand became known in England during the month of February. As a matter of course these five battalions were the first five on the roster for foreign service. Until very recently our military organization, defective as it may have been, and as it no doubt was, could always have born a strain of this nature upon it. But how were matters the other day? Of the five corps sent out to the Cape, making a total of four thousand four hundred and twenty rank and file, no fewer than one thousand one hundred and nineteen men—or more than twenty-five per cent.—had to be furnished by other regiments; giving an average of about two hundred and fifty per battalion of eight hundred strong, that embarked for active service, utter strangers to their comrades and to the officers who had to command them.† Nor is that all. In one regiment, when it was made up as to numbers and embarked for the Cape, there were three hundred and five men who had been less than twelve months in the service; and one hundred and twenty who were under twenty years of age. In another battalion there were of the eight hundred and eighty who sailed, forty-four of less than a year's service, and one hundred and six who were less than twenty years old. A third corps, the Ninety-first Highlanders, left England for the seat of war eight hundred and ninety-three strong. But of these two hundred and eight men were under twenty years of age, whilst two hundred and sixty had not been twelve months in the army; and so on throughout the whole force. So much for our capability to despatch a very weak division of infantry of less than five thousand men—what in Germany or France would be looked upon as barely more than a brigade—to one of our most important colonies on a great emergency. And yet our military estimates for the year 1879-80 amount to fifteen million six hundred and forty-five thousand seven hundred pounds, and this, be it noted, without counting the expenses of the Afghan and South African Wars. If these are the results of our celebrated re-organizations during the last few years, the less we have of such changes for the future the better.

\* See Times, May 13, 1879.

† See Summary of Official Returns given by The Army and Navy Gazette, May 17, 1879.

There is, however, one item—an institution peculiarly British—in our military code which cannot be changed, namely, the power of courts-martial to inflict the punishment of the lash. If the proverbial intelligent foreigner happened to be in London during the first fortnight of July, 1879, and if during that time he attended, even only once or twice, our Parliamentary debates, he must have been not a little amazed with what he heard, and particularly with the tenacity with which so many honourable members defended the aforesaid institution. He must more than once have asked himself how comes it that of all the armies in the civilised world, that of England is the only one in which men are flogged at the present day, or have been liable to that punishment for many years past.

When the present writer first entered the service, some thirty odd years ago, a soldier might, and not unfrequently did, receive three hundred lashes by a sentence of a general court-martial; one hundred and fifty might be awarded by a district or garrison court-martial, and one hundred by a court-martial consisting of officers of the regiment to which the prisoner belonged. In those days, as at present, there were periodical agitations to lessen the number of lashes that could be awarded, if not to abolish the custom altogether. And then, as now, a certain class of military men declared that if so much as a single lash, in the number that could be given, were reduced, the service would at once, and for ever, go to the dogs. Gradually, however, both the power to inflict this punishment, and the number of lashes which could be awarded, have been diminished, until, as it is now, none save a general court-martial can sentence a man to be flogged, whilst the utmost punishment of the kind that can be awarded is twenty-five lashes.

Has the reader ever been present at a "punishment parade?" If so, he will not forget in a hurry what he then witnessed. But, as a rule, to which hardly an exception was ever made, these exhibitions are carefully kept from the eyes of outsiders. Even the most zealous advocate of the use of the cat seems to feel a kind of shame and degradation, when the punishment that instrument inflicts has to be used towards the men of the regiment he belongs to. And if the writer of this paper were to live a hundred years, he would never forget the feeling which came

over him the first time he saw a soldier of his own corps tied up to the triangles and flogged until his back was a mass of bruised bloody flesh. As a matter of course, one gets accustomed to the spectacle, as one does to everything else in the world. But the writer may safely say that he never was present at a flogging parade when at least two or three men or officers had not to leave the ground utterly sick, and often fainting, at what they were obliged to witness. What between the big strong soldier, stripped to the waist, with his arms and legs fastened securely to the triangles, the regimental surgeon standing close by him to see that the punishment was not persevered in if the man fainted or became unwell; the drum-major, or trumpet-major counting the lashes as they were given; the healthy flesh turning more and more bloody as each lash fell; and, though last not least, the disgusting sight of the bleeding back being covered with a shirt, over which was thrown a loose great coat or cloak, before the soldier was marched off to hospital—all these, taken separately or together, formed one of the most brutal sights that the mind of man can conceive. The problem was—and to a certain extent is still—how officers who, on other matters, were kind-hearted men, could not only look on these punishments with approval, but actually defend the practice. The only solution of the difficulty is that throughout the service it was, and is, considered effeminate to regard with horror a punishment which, under other circumstances, any one with ordinary human feelings would abominate and do his best to get abolished. The practice of flogging at our public schools no doubt helps somewhat to make officers regard the military punishment of the lash as one that could not be altogether done away with, and which it is right and manly to defend, if not absolutely to praise.

Did flogging in the army ever reform a bad character? The present writer, who held a commission for fourteen years in the service, can safely say that he never knew of a case. He has seen in his day, in the regiments in which he served and in other corps with which he was in the same camp or garrison, some scores of men flogged. He has a very vivid recollection of being present at a parade at Meerut, in the north-west Provinces of India, when six men received, by sentence of a general court martial, three hundred lashes each. One and all of these men came to a bad

end. Some deliberately killed themselves with drink; others committed greater crimes still in order to be transported, but not one of the six was reformed, or ever made any change for the better. On two occasions he has known men tried and condemned to be flogged for crimes of which they were innocent; in one instance the evidence given was afterwards proved to be false; in the other it was a case of mistaken identity. Did either of these men do any good afterwards? They both committed suicide. In the barrack-room there is, or there used to be, a saying that—"a man flogged is a man lost." And it is the sober truth. Imprisonment, punishment drill, extra fatigue duties—all these can be lived down; and many a soldier who has undergone them has risen to be a non-commissioned—and even a commissioned—officer. But the marks of the cat, like the brand of the French convicts, can never be, and never are, got rid of.

The military difficulty of the day, as was pointed out in the first part of this paper, is how and where to get recruits. Let it once be recorded that on no pretext whatever, neither in the field or in quarters, can the British soldier be flogged, and we should, in all probability, soon see a different and a much more numerous class of men seeking for admission into the service. Why is it that in England alone, of all the countries in Europe, it is looked on as a sort of social disgrace for anyone in the middle, or lower middle, classes of life to have a son or a brother in the ranks? Simply because there is yet, and there will be so long as flogging is possible, a kind of dread of the dishonour which the soldier may incur by being flogged. Nay, even amongst the poorest of the working classes this feeling exists in no small degree. Flogging is certainly much less common than it used to be; but we should recollect that education has spread very greatly during the last twenty years, and even a partially educated man or woman is certain to have a greater horror of the lash than those whose feelings are kept blunter by their ignorance.

One of the most extraordinary doctrines connected with this barbarous practice has latterly been enunciated by those who—let us hope for party reasons only—upheld the punishment. They admit that in quarters, and even in times of peace, flogging ought to be done away with; but that on service it ought to be allowed as a punishment for grave offences. But



surely in the field every man you add to the number in hospital is a very serious evil; and it is well known that a man who has been flogged must remain at least a fortnight or three weeks in the surgeon's hands. In barracks or camp this is a very serious consideration; but on service, when every bed is wanted for the wounded, it must, apart from all other reasons, be the quintessence of folly to increase, even by one, the number of those who have to be cared for and looked after by their healthy companions.

But, say, some military men of the old—and, it is sad to say, not a few of the new—school, the example of flogging is excellent. Is it? I beg to differ from those who hold this opinion. Get hold of any old pensioner, or of any man who has left the service, and has nothing more to fear from his officers, or any military authority, and he will tell you that no sooner is a man flogged, no matter for what crime, than his offence is forgotten, and he is looked upon by his comrades as a sort of martyr to discipline. Nay, more than this; when a flogged man commits in after times some crime of a more offensive character than usual, his comrades excuse him after a fashion, because, as one who has undergone the punishment he is no longer quite himself, and his crimes ought to be leniently regarded. Flogging not only makes the man who has undergone it popular with very many of his companions, but it makes the offence for which he was flogged appear far more venial than it would otherwise have been thought. With many persons, however, flogging is held to because—well, because it is. The end and aim of their reasoning comes to little more. Flogging was most unfortunately made a party question in the House of Commons; and in the excitement of such circumstances men would often vote away their own lives, as they not unfrequently do their own liberties. But I should be sorry indeed to think that of the two hundred and eighty-nine honourable members who on the occasion to which I refer voted that flogging should not be discontinued in the British army, anything like a majority really approved of the custom. That there were soldiers, and soldiers who had seen not a little service in the field, to be found voting on either side, goes far to prove that when discussed in the House on the above occasion, the question was not by any means regarded as a purely military one.

In more than one speech the commander-in-chief has lately intimated that he regarded the question of recruiting for the army as one of capital and labour; that we must go into the labour market if we want men, and offer them fair remuneration for the work they have to perform. The Duke of Cambridge is perfectly right. But how can we do anything of the kind when we still retain even the theory that for certain offences a man may still be flogged? If we want the army to remain in the condition it is—if we desire, as was the case a few short months ago, that not even five thousand men can be despatched to one of our colonies without having to weaken nearly a dozen of the regiments left at home—let us by all means retain the punishment of the lash. But if we want to have really effective battalions, if we desire that those at home ought to be ready to go anywhere and do anything, the sooner this disgrace of the service is abolished the better.

Will it ever be done away with? When we reflect that, as has been said, thirty years ago three hundred lashes could be administered by a general court-martial, one hundred and fifty by a district, and one hundred by a regimental court, and that now not more than twenty-five can be inflicted, and then only by a general court-martial,\* there can be hardly any doubt as to the ultimate fate of the cat with nine tails. It cannot live much longer. Surely in the days when a man who is brutal in his conduct to a horse or a dog can be arrested and punished, it is impossible to believe that the English uniform can be dishonoured by flogging those who wear it, even on the rare occasions when it is now allowable to inflict the punishment.

Even in the sternest of military circles, there has been a very great change of opinion during the last half century or so; as the following anecdote, which was told the present writer a short time ago by a retired officer, will prove.

Not longer ago than 1835, the officer who related the following tale held a commission of captain in one of our crack cavalry regiments. He was put in orders to be president of a regimental court-martial, called together to try a soldier who had been insolent to the riding-master-sergeant when in the

\* There are a few officers and ex-officers still alive—the present writer met one of them not a month ago—who remember the time when one thousand lashes could be inflicted by sentence of a general court-martial.

riding-school. It came out in the evidence that although the man had certainly behaved very badly, he had been goaded on to what he did by the non-commissioned officer who complained of him. The court awarded him a month's imprisonment, and a subsequent month's confinement to barracks. The proceedings of the court were sent to the commanding officer for confirmation and approval; but were returned in a couple of hours through the adjutant, with an intimation that in the colonel's opinion the man ought to have been sentenced to be flogged. The court reassembled; and after some deliberation recorded that the president and members respectfully begged to adhere to their sentence. The trooper was no doubt guilty, but he bore an excellent character, and he had certainly been goaded and worried by the riding-master-sergeant. Upon this the colonel was obliged to confirm—but he would not approve of—the sentence. The latter was read out on parade, and the prisoner was marched off to the cells; but in that evening's regimental order-book there appeared a memorandum from the colonel directing that Captain A. (the president of the court), as well as Lieutenants B. and C., and Cornets D. and E. (the four officers who were the members of the court-martial), should "attend instruction drill in the riding-school until further orders for one hour each day;" and the same authority privately directed the riding-master to make these officers—the captain, be it remarked, had been ten years in the service, and the other four officers had held commissions respectively for seven, five, four, and three years—bump round without stirrups for at least half an hour each day. No reason was given for the order, but the why and the wherefore of it were pretty well known to everyone in the regiment; and the five officers had to go through their punishment drill for nearly a month. The colonel thought he would bully them into selling out, because they had discarded his recommendation to sentence the prisoner to be flogged; but they were game to the last, and went through their penance like men.\* At the present day such a proceeding would be impossible; but at the time it happened it was not thought by any means very extraordinary.

As regards the effects of flogging in

\* The present writer can vouch for the truth of this story, strange as it may seem. It was told him by the captain, now a colonel, who presided at the court-martial, a gentleman he has known for twenty or more years.

the army, and the not seldom injustice of similar sentences, a few interesting anecdotes may be found in a former number of this periodical.\* Those who are the earnest advocates of the lash being continued in the army, seem entirely to forget that it is a punishment which, once inflicted, can never be forgotten or obliterated. Once flogged always flogged, is the not altogether unjust light in which it is regarded by the men in the ranks. A man who has been wrongfully punished in this manner, suffers for it quite as much as if he were the greatest scoundrel alive. It is true that here and there soldiers are to be found upon whom milder punishments have little or no effect; but are such ever made better by the lash? If a soldier is bad enough to merit being tied up to the triangles, the best thing to do is to discharge him with ignominy at once. Why is it that for the last twenty years or more so many men try to enlist in the Life Guards? Simply because in those regiments there is a sort of unwritten law by which the lash is never inflicted. If a man deserves being flogged, the commanding officer gets rid of him; and it is good economy to the state to do so. A man that has once been flogged is nearly always for the rest of his military life a worthless vagabond; and this rule has fewer exceptions every year that education amongst the lower orders increases. But, as was said above, the practice of flogging men cannot last long. Not more than ten years ago ninety-nine out of every hundred military men scoffed at the very idea of the purchase system being abolished: but where is that system now; or who would care to restore the practice, even if such were possible?

#### BANKSIDE.

On the whole I think the "eftest way" to get to Bankside is to drop off the Surrey end of London Bridge. Not literally, of course. There would be inconveniences attendant on that process which might probably outweigh its advantages. It might even be safer to plunge boldly into the wilds of the Borough Market, and take your chance of what might follow. But in the semi-, or as I suppose one ought to say, hemi-metaphorical sense of stumbling more or less precipitately down the steep little flight of well-worn stone

\* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, First Series, Vol. 17, page 394, "The Cat-o'-Nine-Tails."



steps which opens out area-wise from the western footpath, just opposite the coffee-room windows of the Bridge House Hotel, the method suggested will afford a better hope of ultimate arrival than could be safely looked for from any other course.

Not that the first appearance of things on recovering your equilibrium after the plunge is very encouraging. The long narrow alley in which one finds oneself, with its towering piles of stern grey warehouses on either hand, joined every here and there by light iron bridges spanning the grim chasm at the airy altitude of sixth or seventh floor, has an unpleasant resemblance to the corridor of some Brobdingnagian model prison. And there is a clink and a rattle going on continually all around which openly proclaims chains, and to an uneasy conscience might even whisper handcuffs. There is only one "inmate" visibly at work, and his operations are distressingly suggestive of the peculiar style of employment held by one school of prison theorists as essential to any true system of penal discipline. Every half minute or so he makes his appearance with clockwork regularity at one of the upper windows wheeling a small truck, on which is a compact little bale of some heavy article. This bale he forthwith chucks out of window. But it does not fall into the corridor. Just under the sill projects a wooden shoot. But its muzzle—like the eye of a modern poet—is turned inward, and the bale falling into it turns back again and re-enters at the window below. Then the culprit with the truck retires from sight again to reappear in due course with what is apparently the same bale, which he has no doubt been downstairs to fetch, and which he again in due course flings futilely out of window, and so da capo till his time is worked out. That stern-looking official too in the smart uniform, whose function it no doubt is to superintend this edifying operation, but who unmistakably has his eye on you from the very moment of your entrance as upon an obvious new comer not unlikely to give trouble, has an uncomfortable family resemblance to the gentleman with the keys. The letters W. K. W. on his cap indeed do not at the moment lead to any more satisfactory interpretation than "Wandsworth Convict Warder," which sounds on the whole perhaps more phonetic than official. Still there is a dream-like atmosphere about the whole affair which quite prepares you for any little

eccentricity of the kind, and it is decidedly a relief when instead of ordering you promptly back to your cell, the formidable-looking personage informs you with a touch of the ominous cap that your way lies through the gate, and round the corner, and down the little lane, and along the little wharf, and up the little alley, and so forth, and that he himself is simply a polite official of the West Kent Wharf.

By-and-by you begin to think that the polite official of the West Kent Wharf has been playing off his jokes upon you. You pass through the gate safely—not altogether without a sense of relief—and as you go you cast a look behind and see the inverted Sisyphus in the canvas jumper once more eject from his fourth-floor window the enchanted bale, which forthwith returns once more through the window of the third floor on its ordained and everlasting cycle. Then, just as, in profound speculation as to the real meaning of this eccentric procedure, you are picking your way carefully in an entirely wrong direction, a warning shout from the official reminds you of the unturned corner, and hastily retracing your steps you pass duly down the little—you might almost say the Lilliputian—lane, and duly find yourself alongside of the equally Lilliputian wharf. But here you seem to have arrived at the end of all things. There is a river entrance to the tiny dock of course. But even were you disposed to attempt it, that mode of egress is effectually blocked by the not very gigantic barge which occupies the whole space, and from which a pile of animated scarecrows in those Dantesque head-dresses, ingeniously fashioned by thrusting the head into the wrong end of an old potato-sack, are leisurely unloading a lot of rough logs of wood newly arrived from the United States, and destined in course of time to be fashioned into barrel-staves for the neighbouring breweries. Probably the lane is really not wide enough to admit the passage of a cart, or even a wheelbarrow. So a little stage has been erected shoulder-high on which Scarecrow Number One lays V-wise a couple of logs—the ends at the meeting point slightly crossed. On these two more, and on these again another couple. Then insinuating himself into the open end of the little pile, he hoists the whole concern off the stage on to his shoulders, and staggers slowly away to make room for Scarecrow Number Two. He in his turn is duly succeeded by Scarecrows Number

Three, Four, Five, Six, and so on till a double train of loaded and unloaded ants is travelling slowly backwards and forwards along the whole length of the little lane. No one else seems to have any call towards this quaint little Sleepy Hollow of commerce; and when in reply to my enquiry for the nearest way to Bankside, Scarecrow Number Ten draws the back of one hand across his stubbly chin, and with the other slowly points a ghostly finger in the direction of what seems to be simply an aggravated rat-hole in the grimy wall of the great warehouse which hangs tottering over the river mud, the matter begins to assume a comic aspect, verging upon the serious. However there is no help for it. Scarecrow Number Ten is inexorable; grins to scorn my effeminate hesitation, and staggers away with his burden, mumbling hoarsely and toothlessly as he goes a contemptuous string of adjectives and participles, fragmentary but full-flavoured, in sore disparagement of the swell in the go-to-meeting coat. After all, the rat-hole must lead somewhere; so, devoutly trusting that the rat may not be at home, I compress myself into the smallest achievable compass, and take the plunge.

The rat-hole must be longer than it appears to be. I do not seem to have been corkscrewing my way through tottering timber and mouldering masonry more than half a minute or so at the utmost, but when I emerge into daylight on the other side I am in Genoa. Not in the architectural part. The boldest imagination would fail to realise any resemblance between this present locale and the street of the jewellers. But one of the long narrow alleys with the tall grim pile of mysterious building on either hand it might be well enough. And the illusion is enhanced by the fact that the tiny crack, which by some accident has opened out for a moment half-a-dozen inches or so in the clouds, exactly coincides with the half-dozen inches of opening between the lofty summits overhead, giving a sudden sense of blue sky and a suggestion of an actual sun shining somewhere, which to a Londoner in full enjoyment of this blissful "summer" of 1879 is simply bewildering. That quaint-looking dray too, all shafts and wheels, on which the big casks are being piled pyramid-wise, and which, in its present position irresistibly recalls to mind the bottled mail-coach of childhood's days, must surely be loaded with little wine of the country. As for those half-dozen

grim figures plodding slowly along before me in the Dantesque sack head-dresses, which seem to be the fashionable wear of the district, they are Becchini of course; and to judge by the aspect of the street in general must have been pretty actively employed of late.

However, the illusion does not last. To do the clerk of the weather justice that little crack in the cloud-canopy is very promptly repaired, and the drizzling rain which immediately begins to fall again is English—to the backbone. The casks too, when you come to look at them, are of that dark blue tint which sufficiently indicates their contents even without the whiff of unmistakable "ile" which greets our approach; whilst as for the Becchini, there is no mask that a trifle of soap and water might not remove upon the ingenuous, if unshorn, countenance that turns for a moment to shout to a lingering comrade in our rear. Nor does the emphatic Anglo-Saxon of his address to that lagging individual lose anything by being slightly mellowed by a rich Corkagian brogue. We are in London still. The towering piles on either hand are unromantic London warehouses; the brown flood of which one gets a glimpse every now and then through an open chasm in the depths of the Stygian caverns, where droll little railways have improved old Charon off the face of the lower, as their big brothers have taken possession of the upper world, is no other than old Father Thames himself. That huge archway that closes in the vista is part of the great Cannon Street Railway-bridge; and—yes, here is the thing for which I have been looking vainly so many years; the Surrey Nile-source, the missing-link of the metropolis—the "other end" of the Cannon Street foot-bridge. For once, in a life spent hitherto in the more or less beaten tracks of men, I feel all the glowing pride and joy of the discoverer. I begin to understand now how the big octavo volumes get themselves written, and the big meetings fired with enthusiasm. Shall I call a hansom, and rush straight off to the Royal Geographical Society, or shall I sit down and write a big octavo volume forthwith? Let me take a few notes at all events, and they will be as brief and as simple as the first notes of such discoveries must, I fancy, generally be for anyone but a discoverer. The "other end" of the Cannon Street foot-bridge is not an exhilarating spot. It was anticipated I believe at the

time of its construction that at some future period somebody would probably not only find it convenient to pass over it, but be willing to pay a halfpenny for the privilege. That illusion of more sanguine days has passed away. The toll-taker's little hut is still standing, and no doubt when the big bell of Saint Paul's across the river tolls the hour of midnight the closed pigeon-hole flies open again, and a shrouded form resumes its phantom watch for the halfpenny that never comes. But the bridge is abandoned, and the gate, through which no passenger could ever be tempted, is now—somewhat illogically as it seems to me—boarded over. I wonder by-the-way how Speke or Grant would have felt if they had found the source of the Nile shut up!

And with this we emerge from under the thunderous shadow of the great railway viaduct, and step out upon the quaint little Dutch quay of Bankside itself. Whereupon I stand silent for awhile in pleasing but profound astonishment. This is not my first experience of life on the river-bank. When I had the honour, a score or so of years since, of serving a grateful country as a particularly junior clerk in the then newly constructed War Department, we used to occupy the comfortable old house in Whitehall Gardens, now in the possession of the peaceful Board of Trade. I generally when in town look in every now and then upon my old chums—now quartered in the salubrious old rat-warren in Pall Mall—and invariably find if more than a very few months have elapsed since my last visit that the whole establishment has been revolved—no, reformed is, I believe, the technical phrase, from garret to basement, and the entire staff from permanent under-secretary to junior messenger placed on a totally novel footing. But all the changes combined do not equal the change in my old friend the river, as seen from the present point of view. I was young in those days, happily free from any scientific superstition on the score of typhoid and so forth, and rather rejoicing in that peculiar function of Father Thames as the one great open sewer of the metropolis which had so happily forced from our chiefs the unparalleled permission to smoke at any hour of the day all over the office. Now-a-days I never study the semi-scientific padding of my favourite *Pantological Review* but the broad fat slime of the old river-bank spreads greasily out before

my mental vision, and my mind's gorge rises as the well-remembered old stench, thick, faint, yet fullest flavoured, comes floating up under my mental nose in all the rich luxuriance that thousands of tons of lime, and ten thousands of rivers of Condry's fluid could never sweeten or subdue. Yet here I stand upon the self-same river bank, and sniff, and stare, and ponder. It is dead low water. The Bounty of Providence—only a billy-boy, be it understood—lies high and dry under the mouldering old wharf. Between us and the still by no means super-pellucid stream lies a stretch of foreshore, broad enough under the old condition of affairs to inoculate for scarlet fever, typhoid, cholera, and all the rest of it, half the population of Southwark, even without the aid of the half century of Asrael's imps who with nether garments rolled up would infallibly be wading hither and thither mid-thigh deep in the grisly slush, stirring up fresh blasts of pestilence with every reeking trophy they rescued from its unholy depths. Alas! for the recklessness of modern innovation. The avocation of Asrael and all his imps is gone. The grisly slush has vanished, and in its place lies a long stretch of clean shingly beach on which one might be almost tempted to cast oneself down incontinent, and pelt little pebbles into the rippling waves, and listen for floating scraps of melody from the Hall-by-the-Sea. I shouldn't be surprised, when "confidence revives" a little, should that blissful consummation ever be reached, to receive any morning a beautifully printed and glowingly worded invitation to subscribe for say a hundred or two shares in the Bankside Bathing, Hotel, and Aquarium Association, Limited; or to see a molten rainbow break out on all the hoardings in polychromatic praise of the newly discovered Brighton of the Surrey Side.

Bankside would have to abandon its commercial pursuits, of course. But I don't know that the sacrifice would be impossibly severe. Take it for all in all, the commerce of this interesting spot is not carried on upon a particularly princely scale, nor is it, I fear, in any such specially prosperous condition as to cause much feeling of jealousy in the breasts of its big neighbours over the way. The first of the quaint little old-fashioned warehouses that catches one's eye is closed altogether, and its "narrow and wrinkled front" plastered over with urgent announcements of an



immediate sale—under distress for rent. The stock-in-trade is rather eccentric than extensive, consisting simply of "eighty bags of glucose and five casks of lemon-peel." Glucose I find on enquiry to be a species of refuse largely used in the place of sugar in the manufacture of cheap sweetstuff. That mystic robe of virgin white, too, which so appropriately veils the inner richness of our wedding-cakes, and with regard to the composition of which I find my neighbours at marriage feasts pretty equally divided between the somewhat opposing theories of "the very purest white sugar," and "Plaster-of-Paris, my dear fellow, pure and simple," is, I am now told, very commonly constructed of glucose.

The distressed gentleman's next-door neighbour appears to be doing a flourishing business, if not a very aristocratic one. His energies are turned in the direction of waste-paper, and a very comprehensive assortment he appears to collect. The bale that is now being hoisted up to the open warehouse above appears at first sight to consist chiefly of Punches. But as it slowly revolves in its upward course, I notice at the other end the Rock and the Licensed Victuallers' something or other, whilst through a gap in the side I can distinctly trace the letters, "ool-Board Chro." The next bale appears to consist chiefly of pamphlets and paper-covered books in various stages of dilapidation. A stray monthly part of the Family Herald has here got into decidedly bad company, and flutters its well-thumbed leaves in evident deprecation of the objectionable neighbourhood of a whole quire of Boy Highwaymen. Let us hope that its outraged feelings are to some extent soothed by contact on the other side with half a number of the dignified Quarterly. Here comes a sack of letters, not torn or defaced in any way, but neatly tied in little bundles fresh from the pigeon-holes. Lawyers' letters, no doubt, most of them, and pressing requests for the immediate payment of that little bill which has been running so long, and other documents of similarly small value or interest, especially to the owner. But that thick bundle of pale green tinted "reps," so daintily written, so elaborately crossed, so emphatically underscored in every second line, which has thrust itself out through a hole in the coarse sacking in mute protest against the profanation that has befallen it, must have been of interest once—to the writer, at all events. As I gaze after it

moralisingly, a couple of torn scraps come fluttering down upon my nose from under the slipshod feet of the man who awaits it at the warehouse window, and in meditative mood I capture and study them. The first bears simply the familiar vowels, I O U. The other is a fragmentary excerpt from the Book of Job.

Next door but one a quiet and steady trade seems to be going on. There is no particular bustle about the place—indeed, all signs of activity or life are conspicuous by their absence. But through the half-open door I catch a glimpse of a clean and neatly-arranged warehouse fairly stored with stacks of neat little deal packing-cases, which on closer inspection prove, on the authority of a neatly printed inscription on the end of each, to contain "half pounds of milk." No doubt by tea-time the demand for this innocent article of commerce will become more brisk.

At present dulness appears, as the City articles say, to be the feature, not only in the half pound of milk trade, but in commerce generally, along this section of Bankside. There are no further notices of distresses for rent, nor are the shutters up in any more of the dozen or so of little warehouses and counting-houses which fill up the remaining space between the merchant of defunct literature and Southwark Bridge. But they keep their wares to themselves, and do their counting silently, behind closed doors and wired blinds which give no word of information to the profane vulgar on the wharf outside of the commercial mysteries pursued within. It might be two o'clock of a Spanish afternoon for any outward and visible sign of business going on.

But once through the great black echoing arch of the bridge and the scene changes again. Here we are on the premises of the Birtley Iron Company, and though I don't remember at this moment to have visited any Iberian ironworks, I doubt if that energetic metal would allow of a siesta among its votaries even in Spain. At this moment, at all events, the Birtley Iron Company is engaged anything but siesta-wise in the receipt and storage of a large consignment of lamp-posts. It is quite a novelty to see these particularly stiff-backed articles, with which the idea of uprightness is as inevitably associated as with a Prussian drill-sergeant, or an English merchant—of the old school—piled away in stacks like so many sticks of bath pipe. The Birtley Iron Company's wares,



indeed, are altogether of a kind not commonly seen in shop-windows. They are what may be called street-ironmongers, and will fit you up a crescent, or a square, or an odd mile or so of ordinary roadway, just as Mr. Tintacks round the corner will supply you with locks and bolts and window fastenings, or his neighbour, Mr. Mole, with lacquered handles and escutcheons, and chaste cherubs' heads, and elegantly-enriched plates whereon to inscribe your name and your many virtues, and the date at which your melancholy but esteemed order was received. There is quite a fortification all round the premises of gas and water pipes of all dimensions, from the mighty main, through which the pocket Hercules in the leather apron who is superintending the present operation could walk almost without stooping, down to the modest supply-pipe for the suburban paradise of half-a-flozen rooms. Here again is a pile of corner-posts, sufficient to make work for the wheelwrights of a moderate-sized town; here a stack of gratings that might carry off the surplus rainfall even of this present year of grace and downpour. The bulk of the stock is manufactured in the north, and only finds its way to Bankside for purposes of sale. But up this little alley a few yards farther on, between the outer ramparts of gas-pipe fortifications and the grim ruins of the huge deserted warehouse, through the rusty gratings of which you peer down into what might very well have been an ancient banquetting-hall—or possibly a dungeon, for there was almost as little difference between them then as now—we come upon an actual foundry in full operation. Why the most conspicuous feature of an iron-works should always be a large open yard crammed with the crazy carcasses of defunct boilers and tanks and cylinders, and tangled heaps of wheels and cranks and pistons, and grim piles of broken hoops and fragmentary rods in various stages of rust and decay, I cannot tell. Here, however, it is as usual, occupying as nearly as possible the site of the ancient Garden where, doubtless, at the witching hour of night the shadowy mas-tiffs of my lord of Essex still avenge upon poor baited Bruin the successes of his lordship of the Ragged Staff with the ghost of good Queen Bess. And here on the opposite side of Bear Garden Alley is clang and clamour enough for the old Bear Garden itself at the most interesting moment of the gentle sport, only it is clang and clamour of a rather different sort. The

stake is turned into an anvil; the bear is not inaptly represented by the great clumsy mass of iron that comes reeking out of yonder grim den of a furnace; and if ever worrying dogs did their work more eagerly or more effectually than these clashing hammers, the sight must surely have been one to see.

So down Bear Garden Alley again and along Bear Garden Wharf to the foot of Emerson Street, where we come suddenly upon what appears to be, at first sight, the trace of recent revolution. Is it possible that while we have been studying and admiring the peaceful tactics of a playful minority in the House of Commons the Home Rulers of Southwark have broken out in open war, and boldly carried the policy of obstruction to the practical issue of the barricade? It certainly looks like it. The barrier of planks and clay which runs across the foot of Emerson Street is not, indeed, of a very lofty or a very substantial description. There is no great difficulty in stepping over it, and even had not its constructors thoughtfully left an open passageway for carriage traffic through its centre, a very moderate force of scavengers would have found not much difficulty in carting it away altogether. But these are idiosyncracies rather characteristic, perhaps, than otherwise, and making due allowance for little differences of the kind there is really a flavour of communist Paris about it which is almost exciting. It is quite a disappointment to find that the enemy against whom this promising little fortification has been raised is nothing of more importance than the tide. Since the building of the Victoria Embankment over the way, and the consequent contraction of the river bed, Southwark, which had always a certain Dutch element about it, has become more amphibious than ever. Hunting the other day through an old note-book, I came across a sketch of a most ingenious plan for a southern embankment, which, while preserving intact all extant local interests, and even adding to the convenience and value of the existing wharves along the Southwark and Lambeth shore, should nevertheless complete the as yet but half-done work of beautifying the metropolitan river, and at the same time deliver Southwark and Lambeth from all fear of inundation for evermore. But the designer devotes his practical energies to the management of the Bradford Theatre, and none of our London engineers seem to be equal to the task. So Southwark lives

in a chronic state of semi-barricade, and with a spade in the corner of its counting-house, and a little pile of carefully puddled clay under its desk, keeps one eye fixed upon the great tide prophet, Mr. S. M. Saxby, and waits the signal to drop hammer and pen and rush to the completion of its defences. The narrower foot-ways communicating with the exterior—Horseshoe Alley, Cardinal's Cap Alley, and so forth—are permanently secured by being raised into a sharp little hillock some three or four feet high; but the streets have to be left, at least partially, free and level for the exigencies of traffic, and hence the funny little barricades with their little gateways in the middle, which a couple of hours brisk work suffices to close. There is a good deal of discussion going on, especially, as may readily be imagined, in Bankside, as to the measures to be taken for mitigating this chronic state of siege. London in general, as represented by the Metropolitan Board of Works, thinks that it has done quite enough in beautifying and securing the northern bank, whereon for the most part it personally resides. London in particular, as represented by the submerged districts of Southwark and Lambeth, objects to being drowned for the benefit of its aristocratic better half across the river, and protests that as it was London in general that turned the water on to them, it is the business of London in general to bank it out again. Altogether a mighty pretty quarrel as it stands, but one which, at its present standing, tends rather to dampness on the Surrey side.

Going on a little further westward, one is deceived for a moment with an illusory hope that the difficulty has been got over, and that the raising of the Southwark embankment is in actual progress. Alongside of the Sand and Ballast Wharf lies a huge barge half-filled with a mass of sand and stones, which a busy little steam crane is rapidly hoisting in what looks like a Brobdingnagian coal-scoop on to the roof of the warehouse at the other side of the road. Parlous near does the big coal-scoop swing to the corner of the adjoining office; so near that a strong puff of wind or a more impetuous action than usual on the part of the eager little steam crane sends it bump up against it, knocking out, perhaps, half a brick or so, and giving the building generally a battered and dilapidated air not unsuggestive of Strasbourg or St. Cloud. Then, as the coal-scoop reaches the extent of its swing, a mighty pair of

lazy tongs projects itself, to all appearance of its own volition, from the side of the crane, catches it, as it were, by the throat, and seems to throttle it viciously till it opens its iron jaws and, with a crash, drops its burden of sand and stones through the open roof of the warehouse below. Then the victorious lazy tongs release their grip, and the empty coal-scoop swings back into the barge, avenging itself upon the innocent wall by a spiteful little kick as it goes. For the moment it looks as though the level of the Southwark shore must be rising rapidly; but on enquiry this proves to be only one of the peculiar trades of Bankside. As fast as the stones and sand rattle in through the roof they come out again through the door. Only on their way they have been sifted, and the cartloads of stones go out to one customer and the cartloads of sand to another.

A few doors farther on another quaint commerce is being carried on at the sign of the British Lion. The British Lion himself is of the Teutonic persuasion, and a very courteous monarch he is, and very politely does he accede to my perfectly unjustifiable request for initiation into the arcana of his quaint commercial mystery. Herr Löwe deals in broken glass; is not only the principal, probably, indeed, the single representative of his trade, but was himself the originator and inventor of it, and has made a very comfortable little fortune by his invention. To Germany alone Herr Löwe exports annually something over ten thousand tons of this singular article of commerce. At this present speaking two vessels of goodly size are lying off his wharf, each with its narrow single plank gangway, along which dances giddily backwards and forwards an alternate stream of human ants in sack-cloth cows, each with his burden of full or empty basket, whose tinkling contents shoot from time to time into the respective holds with a pleasant rush as of a breaking wave. The outer of the two, a handsome schooner, is being laden entirely with defunct window glass—a whole shed full of which, packed tightly from floor to roof with a solid mass of transparent fragments, looks like a dilapidated glacier. This cargo is destined for Newcastle, where it will be melted down for conversion into medicine phials. Herr Löwe courteously invites me on board, and himself steps airily across the dancing plank to lead the way. But just under it lies the second vessel, a huge open barge full

to the gunwale of broken bottles. If anything unpleasant were to come of my little acrobatic performance there might be awkwardness with the Lord Chamberlain's office. So Herr Löwe smilingly dances back again and shows me instead over his establishment on shore; and a very substantial and handsome old house is the lion's den, with solid old oaken staircase quaintly carved, comfortable drawing-rooms, with solid mahogany doors and window-shutters and pleasant outlook over the busy river; and in the kitchen a handsome marble mantel-piece.

And so we bid farewell to Herr Löwe and his broken bottles, and pass on by Clark's Alley, which "ancient way," as a grim and dim inscription informs us—"being a free passage and landing-place, was closed by the Commissioners of the Clink Pavements, in 1796," and has apparently remained closed ever since. Whether Clark's Alley had been guilty of any other offence than the stated one of being a free passage and landing-place, or whether in the then disturbed state of the Continent it was thought that even such a very back door as this should not be left open for the admission of revolutionary ideas I know no more than I know who the Commissioners of the Clink Pavements were, or what were the clink pavements in respect of which they were commissioned. Some day, perhaps, when I am in an archaeological mood, I may be able to satisfy myself on these heads. At present it is decidedly luncheon-time, so without more ado I plunge into another rat-hole, in which the lately widening street comes abruptly to a lame and impotent conclusion, and after a dim and gruesome burrow of a couple of hundred yards or so, amid strange rumblings and grumbings as of supernunated earthquakes retired from business, and horrid sights, and sounds, and smells unholy, as of a passage not much frequented of the public, or of its helmeted guardians, I mount a longish flight of greasy steps and emerge once more into the familiar upper world of the Blackfriars Road.

#### REMARKABLE RIDES.

To witch the world with gallant horsemanship is a sure way of winning fame with the multitude. A more unheroic ruffian than Turpin the butcher never cried stand and deliver to honest men. Yet he has

been elevated into the category of popular heroes on the strength of a solitary feat of equestrianism, which so far as he is concerned is as mythical as the existence of bonny Black Bess; the actual performers being highwayman Noyes and his thoroughbred bay-mare.\*

More remarkable rides than the famous ride to York are upon record. By dint of keeping constantly in the saddle, and having relays of horses all along the road, the Prince de Ligne contrived to cover the miles between Vienna and Paris—over five hundred, as the crow flies—in six days. This performance was outdone by the Count de Maintenay, who rode the whole distance on one horse, without dismounting. The Count, one of the most accomplished horsemen of his day, was attached to the mission sent by Napoleon to negotiate for the hand of Marie Louise; and was deputed to carry to his impatient master the formal consent of the Emperor of Austria to the marriage, and the miniature of the unwilling bride-elect. To expedite his journey, six of the finest horses in the Imperial stables were despatched to different places on the route, that the Count might change his mount; but the Hungarian roadster he bestrode at starting, went so fast, and stayed so well, that the relays were not called into service, and the matrimonial messenger arrived at his destination long before he was expected; but so exhausted that he was fain to crave permission to be seated in the Emperor's presence, as he delivered up the all-important mission, and repeated the archduchess's message to her future lord. A jewelled snuff-box, sixty thousand francs, and the good steed he had ridden, rewarded the Count for his expedition.

The Count de Maintenay's feat was repeated in 1874 by an Austrian lieutenant, who undertook to ride his horse, Caradoc, from Vienna to Paris in fourteen days. He was unlucky enough to lose his way in the Black Forest, and so waste seven hours, and was further delayed by an accident to his horse, nevertheless he accomplished his task with more than two hours to the good.

At daybreak, one March morning in 1847, Colonel Fremont, with his friend Don Jesus, of San Luis Obispo, and his faithful servitor Jacob, left la Ciudad de Los Angeles—a city in the southern part of upper California—to ride to Monterey, on the Pacific coast: a distance of four hundred

\* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, First Series, Vol. 17, page 512.



miles good measure, through a mountainous, sparsely-peopled country; possessing, too, few roads better than mere tracks, and too many defiles to be anything like easy travelling. Each of the little party was provided with three horses, to take turn under saddle, the loose ones running ahead, unbridled and unaltered, to be lassoed when wanted, which usually happened at the end of a twenty mile stage.

The first day saw a hundred and twenty-five miles compassed, the unshod mustangs galloping the greater part of the way; the only one of their riders who felt at all fatigued being Jacob, whose right arm ached from using the lasso, which had to serve as a whip to keep the loose horses in the right path, as well as for its proper purpose. Another day accounted for another hundred and twenty-five miles, and by nine o'clock at night they were snugly ensconced in Don Jesus's house at San Luis Obispo, and making the most of the occasion.

Having to await the bringing-in of fresh horses, the travellers did not take saddle again until ten o'clock in the morning, and by the time they reached the valley of the Salinas, the seventy mile ride following hard upon a long night of merrymaking, had made Don Jesus so sleepy that he proposed halting for the night; to which proposition, it being then eight o'clock, Fremont readily acceded, and they made themselves comfortable in a wood. A little after midnight their slumbers were disturbed by a stampede of the horses, occasioned by sundry white bears coming to look at the intruders in their favourite haunt. These soon fled, scared by the halloos of the Don, but there was no more sleeping. The frightened horses had to be caught, the fire had to be lighted, breakfast prepared and discussed, and then day had dawned, and it was time to be on the move. By the afternoon eighty miles had been traversed, and the party were safe in Monterey.

The following day, when the afternoon was well advanced, the return journey began, thirty miles being travelled before halting for the night. Colonel Fremont rode the older of two cinnamon-coloured mustangs, and the next day was carried ninety miles by the same animal without its showing any symptom of tiring; but, shifting his saddle to the younger horse's back, he let the other run loose for the thirty miles yet between them and San Luis, and he at once took the lead, and kept it all the way, entering San Luis in a

sweeping gallop, 'snuffing the air, and neighing with exultation at his return to his native pastures.' After half a day's enjoyment of the hospitalities of San Luis, the party set out for Los Angeles, with the nine horses they had ridden from that place, and progressing at the rate of a hundred and twenty-five miles a day, accomplished the eight hundred miles in eight days—including the day and night passed at Monterey, nearly two half-days spent at San Luis Obispo, and all stoppages elsewhere.

A by no means indifferent performance was achieved in 1819, by Mr. Hutchinson, of Canterbury, who had backed himself to ride from Canterbury to London, just fifty-five and a half miles, in three hours, employing horses belonging to himself and his friends, supplemented by some used in running the Wellington coach. The journey was divided into eleven stages, varying in length from five to six and a half miles, and was eventually got through in two hours twenty-five minutes fifty-one seconds, at an average rate of speed of a mile in two minutes thirty-six seconds. Not at all bad work considering what roads were sixty years ago, and that some time was lost in consequence of the horses bolting now and again. Mr. Hutchinson returned home by coach, reaching Canterbury—which he had left at half-past three in the morning—a little before three in the afternoon, in good cue to enjoy the dinner provided by his admiring fellow citizens, who furthermore showed their appreciation of his horsemanship by making him free of the city.

Not many years since a lieutenant of the military train stationed at Woolwich, who had for his soldier servant one Jonathan Howard, suddenly found himself minus man, horse, and sword. As soon as Howard was reported missing with his master's belongings, a constable named Saunders started in pursuit. He succeeded in tracking the runaway to the well known "Elephant and Castle," but there lost the scent. Knowing that Howard had no money about him, the constable was still sanguine of running him down, and ill-provided as he was himself for over-much journeying, he made towards Barnet, thinking the soldier would probably find his way to the fair there. Upon reaching Barnet, as night was coming on, Saunders learned that he had guessed rightly, and also learned to his infinite disgust, that the police on duty there, although warned to look out



for the deserter, had let him slip through their fingers. The audacious rascal, by coolly riding through the holiday crowd with his drawn sword on his shoulder, had been allowed to pass unchallenged in the belief that he was an orderly on duty, and once clear of the throng, the rogue took care to clap spurs to his horse's sides, and put some miles of country between himself and the deceived "blues."

Weary as he was, the zealous Saunders resolved to push on in the hope that Howard would put up somewhere for the night, and that he might come upon him unawares. The former, however, was too shrewd to be caught napping, and his pursuer had the mortification of tramping from town to town, from village to village, for three days and three nights, only to hear that his man had ridden through them hours before, bearing himself as if bound on a martial errand admitting of no delay. His lack of money did not trouble him in the least. When necessity required he put up at an inn, introducing himself to the landlord as the avant courier of a detachment of the Military Train, and ordering billets for his coming comrades, when he had no difficulty in obtaining whatever he or his horse needed, to be charged to the general account, which the quartermaster would pay.

The Woolwich officer plodded on as far as Huntingdon, then, finding his funds and himself alike exhausted, he surrendered the chase to the inspector of the county constabulary, and went his way townwards. Having the command of a well-horsed dog-cart, Inspector Hawkes was able to follow the fugitive with some prospect of overtaking him; but spite of relays of horses, telegrams, and special detectives, Howard got within hail of his native town of Wakefield before he was captured, neither he nor his steed looking much the worse for the ride, which had lasted nearly a month.

Extraordinary feats of equitation have oftentimes been performed without any premeditation on the part of the performer. Here is an instance recorded in a Queensland newspaper: "The owner of a farm at Nirranda, who combines colt-breaking with other pursuits, handled a powerful dapple-grey colt, which, being what horsey men term 'a plum,' it was thought advisable to take to the beach in order to escape the danger attendant on backing such an unruly brute in a stockyard. After having gone through the preparation of lounching

and other preliminaries, the horse was saddled and mounted; but, to the astonishment of everyone present, he bolted, with lightning-speed, for the sea, which he gained in a few seconds, and was soon among the breakers. Three times was his rider washed from his seat, but with that pluck which characterises the colonial horseman, he stuck to the pigakin in a most determined manner. It became a matter of life and death, as the colt was soon beyond the breakers, and swimming most vigorously on the large swells that were rolling inwards; and nothing could be seen but the head and shoulders of the rider as they mounted the billows. He continued this course for about half a mile, when his rider managed to turn his head in the direction of Cape Otway. He kept that course for at least another half mile, in spite of all the efforts used to get him to steer for the beach. The colt then seemed to be thoroughly exhausted, for he floated, without any apparent desire to go in any direction, for about ten minutes. Then, with a sudden plunge, he made for the beach in as determined a manner as he had left it, and in a very short time, horse and rider landed amid the cheers of friends who had been awaiting, with breathless expectation, a melancholy result."

A perilous predicament for a bold rider, truly; but we have read of a worse one. During the exceptionally severe winter of 1766-7, a Mr. Bainbridge, attempting to ride across the Ulverston sands was caught in a frost-fog, and losing his reckoning, got surrounded by the incoming flood-tide. He galloped backwards and forwards, seeking a way of escape but finding none, until his horse succumbed. Still he kept the saddle, floating on the surface of the water for five hours, benumbed by the cruel cold. At last help came. Two boys belonging to a sloop descried the half dead horseman, and gallantly took boat to his rescue. They towed the stiffened man to their little vessel, hoisted him on board, stripped off his clothes and dressed him in their own, poured brandy down his throat until he showed signs of returning animation, and then putting him into the boat, the brave lads rowed to shore through a tremendous sea, and landing with their unconscious passenger, carried him in their arms for half a mile, when, reaching an inn, they left him there to recover at his leisure.

The record of Osbaldestone's performances at Newmarket is too well known,

and Mr. Archibald Forbes's ride from Ulundi has been too recently chronicled in the newspapers to be dwelt upon here. But the story of how the news of Lord Chelmsford's victory was carried to the rear will always figure prominently among remarkable rides.

### "WITH A SILVER LINING."

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

A GIRL came singing through a field of poppies as the sunset gilded the western sky.

Everywhere around her glowed the deep intense scarlet of the brilliant blossoms. Above her head were depths of purple shadow and amber light, and over all brooded the dreamy stillness and tender hush that so often fills the day's last hour.

The girl made a fair living picture amidst the glow and fervour of that sunset scene, as she moved through it all with a certain deer-like grace peculiarly her own, while her lips sang for very gladness, as a bird carols its matin praises in the dawn of a spring day. The song rang out sweet and clear over the quiet fields; it reached the ears of a group of farm labourers returning home from their work, and made them pause a moment to listen, saying, smiling to one another as they stood: "'Tis Miss Vera, sure eno'. God bless her!"

It came in its fresh young melody to a man who stood on the white level road beyond the corn-fields—a man old, and bent, and withered with age, with a hard cold face and dreary eyes, who leaned on his stick, and shaded his sight from the sun-rays, and watched the girl coming swiftly and joyously towards him, as he seldom had watched any human thing.

As she saw him the music left her tongue. Her step grew slower, and as his keen eyes swept over her face she half-paused, apparently doubting whether to speak or not. She knew him well by sight, but hitherto he had always avoided her.

"Singing again!" he said, in a voice as harsh and cold as his face. "Are you so glad? One never sees you without a smile on your lips—a song on your tongue."

She flushed slightly.

"Yes, I am glad," she answered simply.

"And why—can you tell me that? Have you so much to make you?"

"I have health, youth, love. Are they not life's fairest gifts?"

"So fools say."

"And wise men, too, I fancy," the girl said gently. "But whether or no, if they make one glad, should they not be valued? The old seem so often to think that the light-heartedness of youth is a reproach to themselves. I wonder why?"

"Do you mean that I think so?" he asked with a contemptuous smile. "I envy none their youth—not even their gladness. I know how swiftly the one flies, the other fades. There is nothing good in life; the illusions of youth are the veriest vanity. Some day you too will say with me: 'There is nothing left, let me curse Heaven and die!'"

The girl's face grew very pale.

"Oh, never that!" she said sorrowfully. "Never words so despairing or so—wrong!"

The last word was spoken gently and humbly. It was so daring of her she felt to upbraid one so far beyond her in years, in knowledge, in experience.

"Wrong!" he said bitterly, as he stood and looked across the flaming scarlet of the poppies to where the last sun-rays lingered in the west. "What do you know of wrong or right—of life—of the future; of any one of the things that lie hidden in the heart of unfolded years, as the colour and fragrance of the flower lie in the closed bud. Listen!" And he laid his withered hand on her arm, and turned her bright young face towards him. "Listen, child! I was young once, and glad and trustful as you are. To me too there seemed never a cloud on the sky; never a pain in the heart; never an evil or a sin that could turn life to hell, and love to hate, and joy to sorrow. But even as that cloud above us creeps over the sky's radiance and covers the sunset's gold, so surely did a cloud of shame and suffering darken my fate, destroy my illusions. So surely will a like cloud throw its gloom over you, and every creature like you who goes forth on life's journey with blind eyes and credulous heart, to learn, as I have learnt, that of all things life holds, the only thing that lives, and enjoys, and prospers is—Evil."

She looked at him sorrowfully. He was so old, and sad, and desolate. His words hurt her; their chill darkened her simple joyousness even as the cloud to which he had pointed darkened the glowing colours of the sky. For a moment she was silent.

"To say such words, and believe them,"

she said gently, "one must have known great sorrow. I do not understand them quite. God is too good to let mankind suffer more than they can bear, more than He deems just. But for you I am sorry. It must be so terrible to know life has no joy left, to turn from the sunshine and dwell for ever in the shadows."

A smile of terrible irony curved his lips.

"One would look for no worse hell hereafter. Do I frighten you? You look quite scared and white. I cannot help it. I don't know why I have broken my word and spoken even gently to a human thing. I vowed once never to do it. I have seen you so often, and almost hated you for your fair face and your light step, but your voice that is always happy; and as you came across the fields just now some impulse prompted me to stay you. Is your gladness less?"

She smiled wistfully, and her eyes rested on his face with infinite pity.

"Not less," she said gently. "Only if I could but give you back yours—ever so little!"

"It lies in no man's power, still less in any woman's. The clouds are with me for ever now. Go you forth with the sun; our paths lie wide apart: for you, life begins—the joys it may hold are illimitable; for me it ends—the joys it has held are vanity and vexation of spirit. Farewell."

He turned abruptly away—a lean, bent, aged figure, leaning heavily on his stick, with the evening light touching his scanty silvered hair and brown trembling form. The girl, moved by some sudden impulse, followed him.

"Do not shun me again," she said imploringly. "I have seen you so often, and I live so near; and they say you are always alone. It must be so sad."

"It is my own wish," he said almost fiercely. "As for being sad, one need not come to eighty years to find life that!"

Half proudly, half regretfully she turned away. As she did so her eyes rested on the pale soft tints of the evening sky, from whence the glow and fervour of sunset had faded.

"Look!" she cried eagerly, as her outstretched hand pointed upwards. "Look! the cloud is still there, but it has a silver lining."

The old man went on his way. The girl moved silently and sadly along the quiet fields, and through a narrow shady

road, and across a wooden bridge which brought her to her home.

A very simple little place it was; a mere cottage, rented from a miller near by, and just large enough for her father and herself. He was an old and studious recluse, and she was his only child. He had lived here in this quiet world-forgotten village for a score of years, with only his books for companions since his wife had died and left his married life like a dream-memory to him ever afterwards—so short it was and sweet.

The tiny home was very dear to him, and to his child also. She loved to think of the fair young mother who had gladdened it for those two brief sunny years—to trace her footsteps in the garden-paths, her presence in the dainty rooms, her taste in the arrangements of the interior, and her skill in the miniature garden which she had planned and cultured, and where pure white lily-cups and Gloire de Dijon roses, and the scarlet glow of geraniums, and the flush of flowering creepers, coloured and embowered the tiny dwelling. To the girl the whole place was always beautiful in a simple, quiet, dreamy way, which had grown with her growth, and had altered itself to her fancies; whether it lay like a fairy bride-cake in winter, or a fragrant garden-world in summer, with azure and purple-winged butterflies sporting in the flower-bells, and the velvet-coated bees humming their endless song in the hearts of honey blossoms.

She and her father were always together—always companions and friends to each other—always united in interest as in heart—always inseparable in pursuits both learned and simple.

As she crossed the wooden bridge now, she stood for an instant to listen to the rush and music of the deep mill water, and to watch it break over the rocks, and dash in a million foam-bells against the huge wheel; then turning her eyes in the other direction, she saw a figure sitting at some distance up the bank fishing.

The sight was not an uncommon one; tourists and anglers often found their way here, and the deep river was full of pike and other smaller fish. Her eyes rested carelessly enough on this man, sitting motionless and attentively there, with his rod clasped in his hands and his gaze fixed on the river before him. While she watched she saw him suddenly rise, retreat a few steps, and then with short, quick run take a flying leap to a rock in the



middle of the water, evidently intending to take his seat there instead of fishing from the bank. Whether he had measured the distance falsely, or whether his foot slipped on the slippery rock she could not tell, but in a second she saw him submerged in the rushing depths, and whirled like a straw in her own direction.

"Great Heaven! the mill-wheel!" she gasped, standing paralyzed for an instant by the intense horror of that thought.

The current set firm and strong in that direction. In a moment he would be beneath the bridge on which she stood, and whirled onwards till the fierce waters would suck him into their whirlpool, and the cruel wheel would hold him in its grasp. The horror of the situation flashed through her brain like lightning. Without a moment's pause, a second's consideration, she stooped under the railing of the bridge, which was so low it was within two feet of the water.

Holding on to one of the beams for support she let herself drop, and as the water whirled him beneath she seized the collar of his coat and held it fast.

The strain on her power was terrible. Her wrists were wrenched like a pulley as they supported his weight below, and her own weight above. The sound of the water in her ears was like the roar of a furious sea. She cried aloud for help, with an agonized prayer in her heart that it might reach the miller or some of his labourers returning home.

The man was quite stunned; she could see a deep red gash on his forehead, which must have struck against the rock in that fatal leap. A moment more and she feared her strength would fail—a moment more and the river would hold two victims instead of one! A moment—

Oh, thank God! thank God! A shout in her ears—a strong clasp—a helping hand which seized the stiff and lifeless weight in her numbed and straining grasp. A moment and she was drawn back on the bridge, with a face white as death, and limbs that trembled like a wind-tossed leaf.

"'Tis Miss Vera from the cottage, as I live," said a voice. "Bless us and save us, what a thing for a young weak thing like her to go and do. It's a mussy the two on 'em weren't drowned like kittens

together! Wasn't it plucky though, Bill?"

The girl opened her eyes, and nerved herself against the deadly sickness and faintness creeping over her.

"Thank you for your bravery," she said. "How fortunate you were near. Is he safe?"

"He looks bad—nigh dead, I should say," answered one of the men.

"Oh, do take him to the cottage," she cried eagerly, as she raised herself and staggered to her feet. "My father will reward you for your brave action. Where should we be now if it were not for you!"

Her unconscious coupling of the man she had saved with her own self—her anxious, compassionate gaze at his white still face—her shudder of terror at the river as its noise struck on her ear, all spoke of a new and vivid interest—a life roused from its quiet slumbers to an awakening, whose deeper import she had yet to learn.

The men touched their hats and bent down to the prostrate, senseless figure at their feet. They raised him in their arms, and bore him before her to the cottage, with its flush of summer bloom and its calm of summer peace.

As they entered the girl looked up at the sky overhead. The cloud had floated onward, and stood directly over her own home. There was no silver lining to its sombre darkness now.

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